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The Timorese Democratic Union

STATEMENT BY

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TO THE

UNITED NATIONS DECOLONIZATION COMMITTEE

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The Timorese Democratic Union

Mr. President,

Distinguished delegates,

I welcome the opportunity of once again being allowed to come before this important and prestigious forum, to talk on behalf of U.D.T. (Timorese Democratic Union) and the National Convergence of which I am Senior Vice President, about the question of East Timor, a question that has been on the agenda of this Committee for the last 16 years.

Scores of petitioners ranging from representatives of Political Parties, Government delegates, Religious dignitaries, N.G.O.'s officers, Civic organizations and proeminent individuals have repeatedly denounced the brutal, rootless agression perpetrated against our people and the subsequent military occupation of a minuscule island, with a small population though potentially rich in minerals, oil and natural resources, East Timor, whose only crime is to pretend to exercise its inalienable right to determine its own future, by its giant neighbour, Indonesia.

Year after year we have come b efore you with new and undisputed evidence to expose the ever increasing brutality our people is experiencing. To expose, the renewed and more

sophisticated methodes of torture experimented on our countrymen and women who dare to claim for their basic rights to be respected. To expose the continuous violations, abuses, tortures, murders, pillages and systematic denials by the occupying forces to let our people live like human beings.

Year after year we come full of renewed hope because we believe that justice and peace are not meaningless words spoken only on solemn occasions to demagogically impress audiances. Because we believe that the desire to create a new world with a new order where the rights of smaller nations are respected by the larger and stronger nations is genuine one. Because we believe that the help of bodies like this and the international community, decency and common sence, and above all sense of humanity will strike the minds of the rulers of Indonesia. Because we believe that political systems and world rulers come and go, but mainly because we believe that only people is internal and no matter how long and how hard the struggle, justice will prevail and win.

Year after year we overcome all sorts of sacrifices and come and will continue to come until our people is granted the right to determine its own future. Everytime we come we feel more

determined to achieve our goal and more sure that success is not far away.

Despite the huge military presence and display of powerful and sophisticated war apparatus, our people is fighting on. And is fighting in every front, at all levels, inside and outside the country. We confront them on the mountains, in the villages, in schools, in universities, on the streets, in every corner. We confront them with no fear in international fora, in any scenario. We have achieve the point where every Timorese is a resistant fighter, regardless of its position or status or where he lives. We have made our lives a mission, a crusade towards liberation and we have made our homes, every Timorese home, a place of inspiration and militancy. We will fight on with our bare hands and will win because ours is a just cause. Our strength come with our reason and our reason is the liberation of our people. People, as you all know, are eternal, never looses and therefore our victory is certain and soon.

The world have witness over the past couples of years the development and culmination of events that have changed the political scenario of our days. Events have taken place that were unthinkable of a decade ago, even by the more optimistic

mind. The peaceful and orderly transition of Namibia to independence, through a process of free and universal election is quite an achievement to the credit of the United Nations. The fall of Berlin wall (also known as the wall of shame) and the reunifacation of Germany is also remarkable. The release from prison of Nelson Mandela and the beginning of dismanteling of apartheid regime in South Africa is an irreversible process. The fall of Ceaucescu and subsequent liberalization of Romania and other Eastearn European countries are events that illustrate very well that no matter how long and how hard, the people always win. The acceptance and adoption of proposals advanced by President Gorbachev towards liberalization in the Soviet Union are steps towards democracy that the whole world received with joy. The signing in Lisbon of the cease fire treaty in Angola between the rivals parties MPLA and UNITA, through the mediation and to the credit of Portugal is another relevant achievement. The imminent ceasse of hostilities in Sahara, the negotiations in Mozambique and peace initiatives in the middle east, all points in one direction. The world is definetely trying to achieve peace through negotiations rather than confrontation. Finally, the equally important and perhaps more relevant to our struggle, having in mind its similarities, we have the invasion and

occupation of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein forces. World powers reacted promptly. Under the auspices of the United Nations and USA initiatives several countries from diverse points of the political spectrum joined forces and military actions took place. No expenses were to be looked at, no prices on human lives or equipment, no political consequences were to be taken into consideration. A small nation was invaded by its powerful neighbour and that was behond comprehension. It was necessary to take action and quickly. Operation Desert Strom was underway in a click and just in a few months Kuwait was returned to the Kuwaitians. It took days of determined and concentrated military action to defeat the invading Iraqi forces of half a million soldiers. The whole world applauded the action and hailed the victorious forces. President Bush and his military commanders, namely General Norman Shwartzkoff, were elavated to world heroes, champions of the oppressed people a status of quasi God, because small countries cannot just be invaded and occupied by stronger and larger neighbors. Well done, the world said. Well done I repeat. Bravo. But what about East Timor?

In 1975 a small country was invaded by its larger and much, much more powerful neighbour. Successive resolutions and

recommendations of the United Nations have comdemned the military occupation and have demanded that immediate withdrawal of the country in order to guarantee the rights of East Timor people to self-determination. What happen so far? Nothing, absolute nothing, except that Indonesia has continued to make a moquerie of the United Nations Organisations and its members, and the East Timor people continue to die by the thousands on the hands of our Indonesians brothers.

Where are the champions of the oppressed countries? Where are the rescuers of the smallers countries invaded and occupied by larger and stronger neighbours. We continue to wait for you to show up and honour your status of world liberators.

Under the auspices of the Secretary General, Perez de Cuéllar, negotiations are underway and an agreement is imminent concerning the visit of Portuguese parliamentarians to East Timor. Our people welcome and in fact is anxious to receive the advance party of the U.N. and the parliamentarians. We will be on hand to give both delegations the maximum cooperation so that a true and correct assertion of the situation be made. We want everyone to know how is life in East Timor under the Indonesian

rule. We want to judge by themselves the sort of peace and progress our country men and women are enjoying. A sepulcral peace which express sadness, oppression, famine, tragedy and death. We know the Indonesians will also be on hand to prove us wrong and we are aware of the risks our people are exposed to. But please let us at least for this time express our feelings, our thoughts and let us exercise our rights of freedom of speech, something most human beings have it for granted.

And also please, and here I appeal directly to the SEcretary General and the Portuguese government, don't look at us as outsiders and spectators of the process. It is our country and the future of our people that is at stake. We deserve to be informed and we have the right to participate. It is our right also to demand to be heard.

Mr. Chairman,
Members of the Committee and
Fellow petitioners

In closing I would like to emphasize that we are well aware that Indonesia is the fifth largest nation of the world and

has the largest Muslim population in the world, is a moderate member of the non aligned movement, an important oil producer and occupies a strategic position astride the sea lanes between the Pacific and Indian oceans. A prominent member of ASEAN. Plays an important and decisive role on peace negotiations in Cambodia and in maintaining the security of Thailand in the pace of Vietnam's destabilizing action in Indochina in the eightys.

We are aware that our people is mostly catholic, we occupy only half of an island, our population is barely over 600,000, our oil is still on the ground, our natural resources are still unexplored, that by no means we resemble Kuwait, but we are human beings and we too have the right to exist as a people and a nation.

Despite being always push aside my party continues to avail itself to any constructive resolutions for an honoured and just solution for East Timor.

Thank you.